

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0573
LINDA CASHDAN

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"HABITAT" PREVIEW

ANNCR:

MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED THIRTY NATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO VANCOUVER, CANADA IN JUNE (MAY 31 - JUNE 11) TO ATTEND HABITAT, THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENT. LINDA CASHDAN HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:

VOICE:

THE CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENT WILL BE THE FIFTH AND POSSIBLY THE LARGEST UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. AND THAT IS FITTING. FOR IN MANY RESPECTS HABITAT IS A GRAND FINALE...A SUMMATION OF THE FOUR CONFERENCES THAT PRECEDED IT. THIS WILL BE A CONFERENCE ABOUT ENVIRONMENT AND POPULATION AND FOOD AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS...AND MORE.

BY "HUMAN SETTLEMENTS" THE UNITED NATIONS MEANS "PLACES WHERE PEOPLE LIVE" -- THE TOTAL HUMAN COMMUNITY. THE PURPOSE OF A CONFERENCE ON "HUMAN SETTLEMENTS" IS TO EXAMINE ALL ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNITY, FROM BUILDING STRUCTURES TO ENVIRONMENT TO EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS, AND TO MAKE PLANS NOW FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE. IN SHORT HABITAT WILL ATTEMPT TO REVITALIZE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS AND CREATE RATIONAL BUILDING PLANS FOR THE DEVELOPING NATIONS OF THE THIRD WORLD.

CITIES WILL GET CLOSE SCRUTINY, AND FOR GOOD REASON. TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO, THERE WERE FIFTEEN CITIES IN THE WORLD WITH A POPULATION OF ONE MILLION OR MORE. TODAY THERE ARE FIFTY. IN TWENTY FIVE YEARS THERE WILL BE TWO HUNDRED. INDEED, BY THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND, IT'S ESTIMATED THAT MORE THAN

HALF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WILL BE CITY DWELLERS, OVER THREE BILLION PEOPLE. HABITAT WILL STUDY THE CAUSE OF THIS 100, SPECIFICALLY, WHAT MAKES PEOPLE LEAVE RURAL AREAS? WHAT SUPPORTS AND SERVICES CAN BE GIVEN TO RURAL COMMUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE INHABITANTS TO REMAIN WHERE THEY ARE?

LIKE OTHER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, THIS ONE IS EXPECTED TO STIMULATE NATIONAL ACTIVITY. IN THE UNITED STATES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE URGING THAT A NATIONAL BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE MUST BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD DEVELOPING A GLOBAL BLUEPRINT. "FIVE YEARS AGO, WE LEGISLATED CLEAN AIR WATER," SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY TOLD A RECENT HABITAT PLANNING SESSION. "NOW WE DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN AFFORD THE BILL. IT'S ONE THING TO PROCLAIM SOMETHING; IT'S ANOTHER TO ACCOMPLISH IT. AMERICA MUST DEVELOP PROCESSES FOR FUTURE PLANNING THAT ARE NEITHER DICTATORIAL NOR HAPHAZARD." HOPEFULLY, HABITAT WILL BE RELATIVELY FREE OF FRICTION BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIALIZED AND THIRD WORLD NATIONS. UNITED STATES HABITAT COORDINATOR STANLEY SCHIFF REPORTS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A STRONG SPIRIT OF CAMARADERIE BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS DURING PRELIMINARY HABITAT MEETING. IN HIS WORDS, "I THINK WE ALL SENSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROFIT IN THE FUTURE BY MISTAKES MADE IN THE PAST."

JS/RCS